

Geography is a vast subject, and the table and chair method is needed here more than anywhere. By ten the children *should* understand maps, plans, and drawings to scale. It is surely not necessary that they should be able to make plans of towns and the surrounding country as the Germans do. It is not convenient in school life, and, besides, it leaves nothing to the imagination. They know, as a rule, simple physical facts; the names of the oceans and continents and their shapes, the meaning of terms, and, lastly, the principal facts of their own country. They have, as a rule, incidentally picked up some geographical knowledge from other lessons, but there is time for no more than this in the school curriculum. With regard to History, they are generally familiar with all the English History *Stories*, and they ought to know a few of the principal battles with the dates. The dates of the kings might be learnt between ten and twelve.

At the word Language—one is obliged to make a perceptible pause, so much controversy has of late years raged around it. It do not think, however, it is difficult to make a reasonable standard and yet keep friendly with all sides. At ten, the child might be able to speak and write very simple French sentences, and after that, supposing he grasps the rudiments of English Grammar, he might begin Latin. It yet, I think, remains to be proved whether that will prevent him from becoming a learned classical scholar.

F. R.

Some of the students have asked for collective evidence from students of what should be considered the average attainments of children we usually have to teach. Miss Rankin has introduced the subject in a very helpful and interesting way. Perhaps other students will send accounts of their experiences and opinions. By the way, do you all agree with Miss Rankin that Latin should come before the rudiments of English Grammar? One object in teaching Elementary Latin Grammar to children is to make use of inflections which they can see with their bodily eyes and so (to quote from a familiar source) "to help them to see what English Grammar would be at when it speaks of a change in case or mood, yet shows no change in the form of the word."

(ED.)

READING, WRITING, SPEAKING.

MUCH has been said lately in the *L'Umile Pianta* and at our Students' Meetings about the advisability of starting a Reading or Magazine Club. Few will deny that there is much truth in the cynical remark of the learned that the young people of to-day spend far too much time over books; how far such a truth may apply to our studies I shall not discuss. Let it suffice that our vocation as teachers does necessitate much book study outside our actual professional work; and that the greater number of the members of the Students' Association are agreed that it would be well to start some kind of a literary Society, the rules of which should be so lax that they would be most binding. This paradox does not need any explanation. We want to make the proposed society a conscience. Not the least of our duties is to stimulate the desire of Knowledge (Curiosity); our Students' Meetings and our Magazine exist because we recognize this duty. Again, we know that one of the most pleasant channels through which knowledge may be imparted is conversation, by possessing and knowing how to use discreetly what the Irishman would call "the gift of the gab." Therefore, as well as reading good books we must know how to speak well, we must know how to make our words represent our thoughts. We need not, in striving to do this last, forget the distinction, which as our "Mater" would have her bairns remember, exists between lecturing and teaching. And it is said that it was the opinion of Crassus that men were deceived by the saying, that we learn to speak by speaking; for most men in this way practise only their voice, and not even that according to any principle; they practise their strength also and acquire volubility of tongue, and they are pleased with their abundant flow of words. But the true saying is that by speaking badly, men very easily learn to speak badly. Speaking without preparation is useful, but it is better to think well on the matter first and then to speak with due preparation and more exactness. But the chief thing is to write much, and that is a kind of labour which

most people shun. By writing down what he thinks, a man overcomes the natural vanity of merely looking to the effect of his words on others. A man, to avoid faults and acquire the power of instructing, pleasing, and finally convincing, must undergo the discipline of training in Oratory.

Might I suggest to the Editor that the following be rules for such a Literary Society as it is proposed to start amongst us. Each member to bind herself to study a subject of her own choice during the *year*. She would let the Editor know what subject she had chosen. The Editor then to use her discretion in asking a member in turn to write (*a*) upon her subject, (*b*) her ideas on that subject, or any passage or paragraph in the books she has read which might be helpful to other members, (*c*) a list of the works used while studying her special subject. Any member would be also free to tell of any books she found interesting, with a word or so to indicate the matter, style, etc. of such.

I only write *year* in the above suggestions as one would *x* in an algebraical problem.

E. A. MAGILL.

THE WINDOW INTO THE WORLD.

PETER the Great built St. Petersburg that it might be his "window into the world," realizing the danger his people ran from crystallizing too much.

We teachers are sadly apt to crystallize and fossilize; beyond our teaching and our particular family concerns we lose touch with the world without. Some of us have no excuse, for we live in the throbbing centre of it, others hover wistfully at times upon its borders; but these are lonely outposts which are never stirred by its changes and chances, and for such as these I will try to raise up the columns of a mental St. Petersburg. Well, the world at present is focussed for long sight—we all live with three-quarters of our minds and souls in South Africa. How good it is for us! It drives people who say they "don't care for politics"—for a great many women most unhappily do not—to read the papers intelligently for the first time in their lives. But what comes home most

nearly to us is, how much, or how little, are we to excite the children's interest in it all? Personally, I should say, let them hear as much about it as possible; let them make an album of cuttings from the illustrated papers;—let the boys play over the battles with their soldiers, and let them keep a map and alter the flags themselves. It is a preparation for facing necessary horrors and the sterner side of life; altogether it is a grand and great opportunity of giving them real, living ideas of what "patriotism" means, not lip service, but hardships and risk and the sinking of personal relationships and interests. Of course there are dangers—a child is not at all given to "loving its enemy." A certain teacher was indiscreet enough to say something about Mr. Cronwright Schreiner, and his mission, to one of her pupils. Days after this latter burst out with "and as for that — — — (adjectives mostly strong!) man, let him go back to his own country and taste the sword!"

But the dangers are more than counterbalanced. Personally I know of a case in which the heroic ideas and examples given us in the last six months have gone far to convert a "cry-baby" into a little Briton. But we teachers are not only concerned with the present—we often have to go back and explain how it has arisen out of the past. To understand what South Africa has been through in the last forty years I strongly recommend every "Humble Plant" to read *The Life of Sir John Charles Molteno*. It is written with a strong personal bias and is very misleading on the subject of the Zulu War, but it does throw glimmers of light upon that involving chaos of darkness "Cape Politics." Another phase of thought altogether which was much exercising men's thoughts but lately was the Vaughan—St. John Mivart—controversy. Now, of course, we should probably none of us go the length which the men of science seemed to think necessary; but then, he was a deliberate pioneer and it was a test case. We, who have been blessed by a Scale How training, have been taught to look upon science as a revelation of God, and therefore from God, and the question at issue was not in which or what form we may apprehend certain dogmas, but whether "revelation" is final or progressive. If we believe in the evolution of man in body and mind (and possibly even spirit), surely we may believe that as man becomes more and more capable of apprehending truth, to